Chapter III

THE PORTS OF DEPARTURE

In the Footsteps of the Opium Trade

The opium stations, dotted along China's southern coast, were early adopted as convenient places for the shipment of Chinese emigrants to the western world. Opium had been known and used in China for centuries, mostly as medicine. The habit of mixing it with tobacco and smoking it originated in the Dutch East Indies and was introduced into China around the beginning of the seventeenth century.[1] Alarmed at the reports of the ill effects of the drug, Emperor Yung-cheng issued an edict in 1729 prohibiting its importation.[2] But the people had grown to like it and a contraband trade developed.

Well-armed British and American ships, loaded with opium, anchored a short distance from shore and Chinese fast boats ferried it secretly inland. Proclamations, penalties, and executions failed to stamp out the traffic. By the first decades of the nineteenth century, Indian and Turkish opium more than paid for the tea and silk of China that was so much sought after by the West.[3]

The "receiving ships," as the floating warehouses of opium were called, initially anchored at Whampoa, the outer deep water port of Canton. From time to time, there was some trading at the Portuguese enclave of Macau, but in 1822, Lintin island at the mouth of the Pearl River estuary became the principal

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1 Hsin-pao Chang, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1964), 16.

2 *Ibid.*, 17.

3 Michael Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-42* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1951), 9-14; A. J. Sargent, *Anglo Chinese Commerce and Diplomacy* (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1907), 53-57; Charles C. Steele, "American Trade in Opium to China, Prior to 1820," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. IX, No. 4 (December 1940), 425-444.

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opium depot for the Canton area.[4] Cumsingmoon, a sheltered harbor lying across from Lintin island, became a refuge for opium ships in bad weather or when they were in need of repair.[5] Among some of the other opium depots scattered along China's tattered coastline were Namoa island at the mouth of the Han River adjacent to Swatow; Wusung, the outer port of Shanghai on the Yangtze River; and the British possession of Hong Kong (see map 2).[6]

Through handsome bribes to local officials, a system of connivance and noninterference by Chinese authorities had become the established pattern at these depots. It was natural then that Western merchants interested in developing yet another illegal and lucrative trade on the China coast would gravitate to these sanctuaries.

The initial shipments of Chinese emigrants that sailed from Amoy for Cuba in 1847 were experimental. The voyages were deemed successful. Two years later, 75 emigrants left Cumsingmoon for Peru, and in 1850, over 1,600 followed them. Cumsingmoon was more of an anchorage than a port. It had sprung into existence in the early 1840s when opium ships began to frequent its sheltered harbor. By 1847 it had a population of from 3,000 to 4,000 composed mainly of petty traders, boat people, and pirates.[7] There being no duly constituted authority, irregularities of all kinds flourished.[8] Three of the six ships that departed from there in 1850 with emigrants for Peru experienced mutinies with serious loss of life.[9] This beginning augured ill for the future of Chinese immigration to Latin America. In subsequent years, the traffic in emigrants returned to Amoy and spread to Canton, Swatow, Hong Kong, and Macau. Crime and irregularities accompanied it wherever it went.

The Port of Amoy

Public attention was first drawn to the problems besetting emigration from China to the Western world by a disturbance at Amoy in 1852. Amoy, an

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4 C. Toogood Downing, *The Fan-Qui in China in 1836-7*, 3 vols. (London, Henry Colburn, 1838), III, 167.

5 *Ibid.*, I, 50.

6 For a full list of opium stations see *The Friend of China*, March 6, 1868.

7 "Report from the Select Committee on Commercial Relations with China," (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. XXXVIII), 159.

8 Bowring to Malmesbury, January 5, 1853 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. III), 97.

9 See Table 17.

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island about ten miles in diameter, lies in the wide and spacious estuary on th coast of southern Fukien. A narrow channel separates it from the mainland A few miles inland lay the provincial capital of Chang-chow and beyond tha stretched the densely populated black tea and sugar country of the provinc of Fukien (map 3). Amoy was at this time the principal emigration cente for Southeast Asia, and Western ships had been involved in that traffic ever prior to the opening of the port to foreign trade by the Treaty of Nanking in 1842. Opium smugglers also frequented the port, and there were said to be over six hundred opium dens on the island.[10]

In the early 1850s, Amoy had a population of about 250,000, and it was estimated that the surrounding neighborhood could easily provide 50,000 emigrants annually.[11] Between 1845 and August of 1852, 5,715 emigrants left the area for places other than Southeast Asia: 2,666 went to Australia, 990 to Havana, 469 to British Guiana, 420 to Peru, 380 to the French island of Bourbon, 380 to Hawaii, and 410 to California.[12] Two British firms—Messrs. Syme, Muir and Company, and Tait and Company—handled most of this traffic. Syme, Muir and Company had erected a large shed next to the customhouse to accommodate emigrants awaiting shipment. This structure and others like it were known as barracoons,[13] a term borrowed from the African slave trade where it connoted an enclosure or barracks for the temporary confinement of slaves. On the China coast, the operation of the barracoons was usually distinct from the shipping end of the emigration business. Emigrants were collected in these buildings by speculators with the help of crimps and were sold to shipping companies or captains of vessels at so much per head, the price varying with the amount of competition.[14] The governor of Hong Kong described the procedure:

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10 Islay Burns, *Memoir of the Reverend William C. Burns, MA, Missionary to China from the English Presbyterian Church* (London, James Nisbet and Company, 1870), 378; Tong, *United States Diplomacy in China 1844-60*, 61; Hunter, *The Fan-kwae at Canton*, 66.

11 "Journal of Occurrences," *Chinese Repository* Vol. XVI, No. 4 April, 1847), 208; Burns, *Memoir of the Reverend William C. Burns*, 378.

12 Bowring to Malmesbury, Inclosure 3, September 25, 1853 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. III), 19-20.

13 The word would seem to be a corruption of the Portuguese *barracão* or the Spanish *barracón*, augmentative of *barraca*, which means a small cabin or hut.

14 Mayers to Alcock, November 1, 1866 (BFO 17/873).

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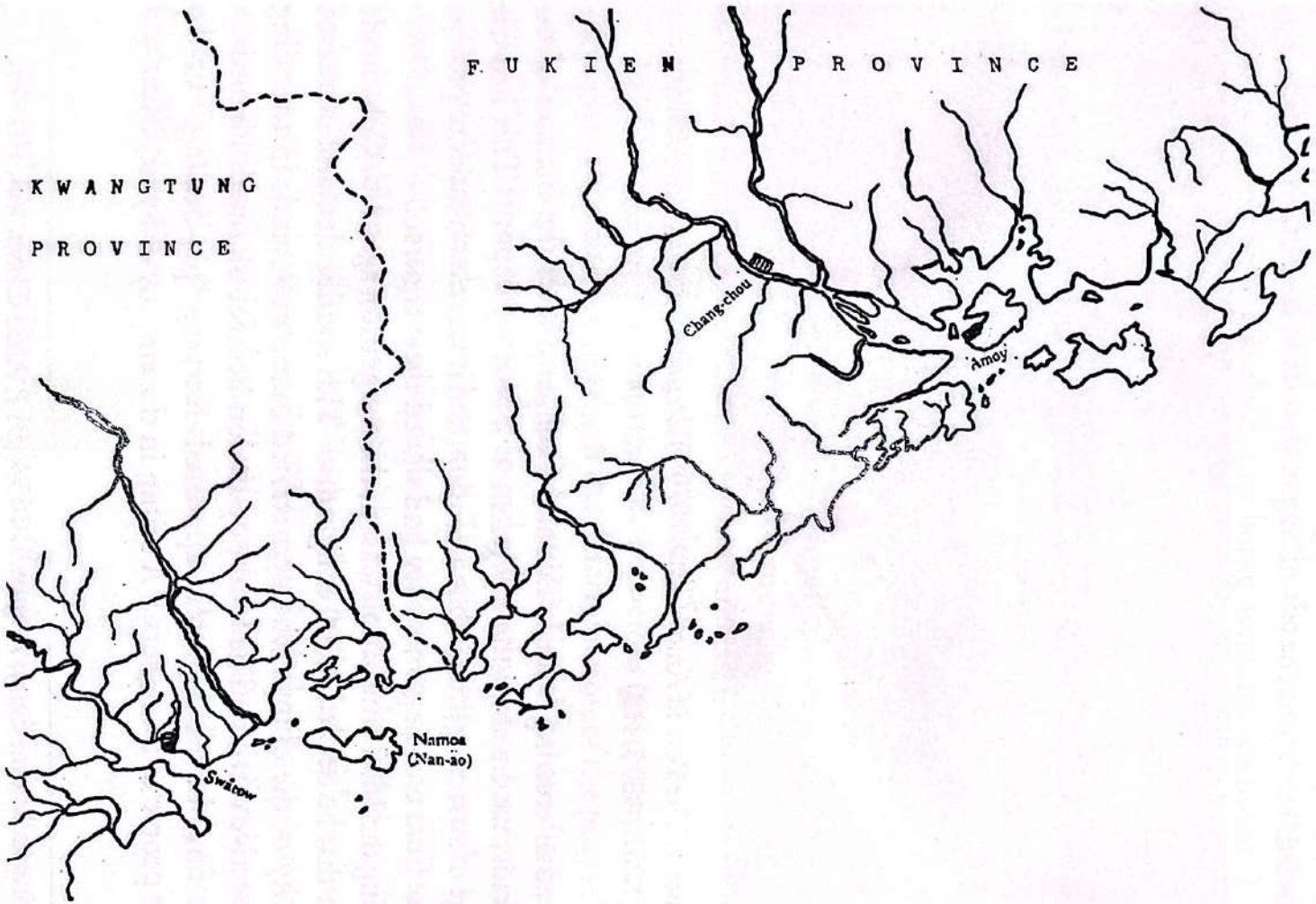

Map 3
A section of the coast of Kwangtung and Fukien provinces showing the Ports of Amoy and Swatow and Namoa Island

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I have myself seen the arrangement for the shipment of coolies at Amoy: hundreds of them gathered together in barracoons, stripped naked, and stamped or painted with the letter C (California), P (Peru), or S (Sandwich Islands), on their breasts, according to the destination for which they were intended.[15]

Figure 1. The Port of Amoy Circa 1870 (Taken from *Le Tour du Monde*, Vol XXIX, 1875,412)

Instead of erecting a shed, Tait and Company, after the manner of the opium trade, used a ship, the *Emigrant*, as a floating depot.[16] This had the advantage of attracting little public attention, and it was much easier to prevent emigrants from escaping once they had signed their contract.

During the 1852 emigration season, the emigration agent for Cuba made it known that he needed 8,000 emigrants.[17] This sudden demand increased the activity of the crimps who perpetrated numerous frauds in rounding up prospective recruits. The local population became alarmed. Placards, a common form of social protest, appeared decrying "pig-dealing," or the selling of people to foreigners.[18] A crimp in the employ of Syme, Muir and

15 Bowring to Malmesbury, August 3, 1853 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. III), 14.

16 Bowring to Malmesbury, February 7, 1853 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. III), 113.

17 Borwing to Malmesbury, October 1, 1852 (*Ibid.*), 29, 89; Newcastle to Barkly, January 31, 1853, Sub-enclosure to Enclosure 3 (*Ibid.*), 224.

18 According to Samuel Wells Williams the Cantonese called contract-emigrants "Chu-tsai", literally pigs, "after the mode of catching and carrying pigs in

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Company was apprehended by the local authorities in November, 1852, and was accused of abducting unwilling emigrants. Francis D. Syme of Syme, Muir and Company and his clerk, William A. Cornabé forcibly "rescued" their employee from the local police station. When the people learned of this, they were aroused to an ugly anger. In the ensuing demonstrations two British subjects were assaulted, one being seriously wounded. To protect British lives and property, a party of marines were despatched from Her Majesty's man-of-war, the *Salamander*, which was lying offshore. The animosity of the people was directed principally against the barracoon and they were intent on destroying it. They stormed the building a number of times pelting the soldiers guarding it with stones, and only dispersed after the soldiers opened fire upon them killing eleven or twelve and wounding between twelve and sixteen.

In a formal investigation of the disturbance that heard evidence from the entire British mercantile community as well as from missionaries and several Chinese witnesses, it was conclusively shown that the hostile actions of the people were due to the abuses surrounding emigration, "which have been the natural result of the recklessness and cupidity of shippers, and the employment of rascally emigration brokers."[19]

In the wake of the disturbance, numerous proclamations appeared throughout the city, setting forth the determination of the people to stamp out abuses. A proclamation issued by the "Inhabitants of the Eighteen Wards," declared that anybody found transacting business with the hongs of Syme, Muir and Company and Tait and Company would be put to death, and that crimps caught deluding innocent people to emigrate would not be handed over to the authorities but would be killed on the spot.[20] In such an atmosphere, local authorities could not risk countenancing continued immigration to the West, particularly the operations of the abovementioned British firms. Furthermore, the abuses of emigration posed a serious threat to legitimate commerce. Dr. John Bowring wrote to the Earl of Malmesbury,

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baskets," See *The Chinese Commercial Guide* (Hong Kong, A. Shortrede and Company, 1863), 224.

19 The minutes of the investigation and the depositions taken from those examined are to be found in BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. III, 49-95.

20 *Ibid.*, 84. For a proclamation issued by the "Scholars and Merchants of Amoy," see U.S. House, Ex. Doc. No. 105, 34 Cong. Sess. 1.

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> Nothing could be more fatal to our interests and prospects in China, than that the shipment of emigrants should be connected with breaches of the public tranquility, that it should make foreigners odious to the Chinese people, and interference with that growing disposition to friendly intercourse which was so remarkable at Amoy and its neighborhood, and was producing such an extension of our commercial relations until interrupted by the irregularities which have had their origin in the cupidity of the collectors and shippers of coolies.[21]

Consequently, the barracoon was torn down, and the unfortunate crimp, whose incarceration and rescue triggered the entire episode, was handed over to the Chinese authorities. These actions helped restore a measure of calm. The British Consular Court at Amoy merely fined Francis D. Syme $200 and William A. Cornabé $20 for breach of treaty regulations with China.[22] The *Emigrant*, the floating depot of Tait and Company, and the bulk of the emigration business moved to Namoa (Nanao), an island near the port of Swatow, which had long been a haven for opium traders.[23]

Swatow and Namoa

Though the port of Swatow was not officially opened to foreign trade until 1860,[24] the local authorities, finding opium a rich source of revenue, had long permitted opium vessels to anchor there. Agents of the two great British opium houses, Dent and Company and Jardine, Matheson and Company, had built residences and warehouses on the adjacent island of Namoa.[25] It was reported in 1853 that Tait and Company had erected barracoons on the island and had succeeded in buying over the local mandarins for one tael (6s 8d or $1.50) for every emigrant shipped.[26] William Breck, the U.S. consul at Swatow, estimated in 1861 that 40,000 to 50,000 laborers had been

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21 Bowring to Malmesbury, December 20, 1852 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. III), 41.

22 Backhouse to Bowring, December 18, 1852 (*Ibid.*), 48-49.

23 Bowring to Malmesbury, February 7, 1853 (*Ibid.*), 113; Breck to Cass, March 6, 1861 (U.S. Dept. of State, Despatches from U.S. Consuls at Swatow, 1860-1881).

24 Morse, *The Trade and Administration of China*, 278.

25 Scarth, *Twelve Years in China*, 47; Theodore Walrond (ed.), *Letters and Journals of James, Eighth Earl of Elgin* (London, John Murray, 1872), 226; Burns, *Memoir of the Reverend William C. Burns*, 378; Abend, *Treaty Ports*, 104.

26 Bowring to Malmesbury, January 18, 1853 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. III), 109.

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Table 3
The Ports of Departure of Chinese Emigrants to Latin America, 1847-1874

PORTS	1847	1848	1849	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	TOTALS
AMOY	632					2,964	616	604	1000	600	1,028	1,454				385			1,092	973								11,402
CUMSINGMOON			75	1,665	352	1,350	1,370	325																					5,137
CANTON						254	350			348			972	1,996	1,486	326	930	594	2,952	2,156						510	388		13,262
SWATOW						702	3,540	1,800	7,320	4,232	4,858	2,101		400															24,953
SHANGHAI												130	355																485
NINGPO									47																				47
HONG KONG								310	397	1,019	560		369	1,032	2,583	1,922			493	825	291	252	500	381					10,934
MACAU					813	250	2,037	558	681	2,703	7,256	10,053	8,476	7,871	3,404	2,211	6,660	1,038	1,367	2,402	1,654	1,206	9,136	1,340	1,651	921	1,540	1,283	82,371	205,626
SINGAPORE									303											312										615
UNKNOWN								895					352	292	683									828						3,050
TOTALS	632		75	1,665	1,165	5,520	7,913	4,492	9,701	8,902	13,756	13,738	10,172	11,591	8,156	4,844	7,590	1,098	8,211	2,829	1,683	2,458	9,636	1,461	1,651	1,922	1,540	1,283	275,511

Source: Compiled from tables 25-48 in appendix VI.

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"seduced, stolen and taken to Havana and the Chincha Islands, not one of whom has ever returned."[27] This would seem to have been an exaggerated guess on Consul Breck's part. As far as it can be ascertained, somewhere between 25,000 and 30,000 emigrants sailed from Swatow for Cuba, Peru, and the British West Indies between 1852 and 1860.[28]

Figure 2. The Port of Swatow circa 1870 (taken from *Le Tour du Monde*, Vol. XXIX, 1875, 411)

Hallett Abend, in his work *Treaty Ports*, states that 8,000 emigrants died on Namoa island of plague and starvation in one year while waiting for emigrant ships.[29] This is not substantiated by any other sources. That abuses abounded there can be little doubt. Between 1855 and 1860, seven mutinies took place on ships that sailed from Swatow.[30] Consul Breck observed that the Swatow people hated foreigners because of the "many wicked practices that had been perpetrated upon them."[31]

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27 Breck to Cass, March 6, 1861 (U.S. Dept. of State, Despatches from U.S. Consuls at Swatow, 1860-1881).

28 See Table 3.

29 Abend, *Treaty Ports.*

30 See Table 17.

31 Breck to Cass, March 6, 1861 (U.S. Dept. of State, Despatches from U.S. Consuls at Swatow, 1860-1881).

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The notoriety that was seemingly endemic to the emigration traffic posed a serious threat to all trade on the China coast, illegal as well as legal. The opium interests were becoming alarmed at the possible consequences of continual disturbances at their opium stations. The opium trade was illegal not only in Chinese law but in British law as well. Her Majesty's government pledged itself in the Treaty of Nanking that British subjects and ships would not trade other than at ports designated in the treaty. But in regard to the opium trade, the British government had adopted a policy of noninterference. Was emigration to be treated in like manner? The opium houses were decidedly opposed to such a step.[32] Dr. John Bowring, in writing to Malmesbury, the secretary of state for foreign affairs, in 1853, asked the rhetorical question, "Shall we, ought we, to extend the opium indulgence to another species of traffic wholly unprotected by the guarantees which the wealth, position, and the high character of great opium houses offer?"[33] A proposal in December 1853 by James T. White, the British emigration agent, to embark emigrants from Namoa, elicited a sharp remonstrance from the British Foreign Office,[34] and he was instructed to confine his activities to ports legally open to British trade.[35] Under pressure from the opium houses, which exerted considerable influence with the local Chinese authorities, as well as in London, the emigration traffic gradually shifted from the opium stations to the legal ports. The last emigrant ship for Latin America from Cumsingmoon sailed in 1854 and from Namoa in 1860. Immigration to Latin America from Amoy ceased in 1858. Various attempts during the 1860s to revive emigration at these ports were largely unsuccessful. A proclamation by Governor-general Laou in March 1860, sanctioning emigration from Swatow, had no visible effect as far as the traffic to South America was concerned.[36] A few emigrant vessels left Amoy for Latin America in 1862, 1865, and 1866. However, up to the termination of the traffic in 1874, small batches of emigrants continued to leave these ports clandestinely in native boats to rendezvous with emigrant vessels elsewhere.[37]

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32 White to Walcott, December 26, 1852 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. III), 230.

33 Bowring to Malmesbury, January 5, 1853 (*Ibid.*), 97-100.

34 Addington to Merivale, April 4, 1854 (*Ibid.*), 332-333.

35 Emigration Commissioners to White, February 24, 1854 (*Ibid.*), 331-332.

36 See BFO 97/102B for the full text of the proclamation.

37 Cooper to Alcock, October 20, 1866 (BFO 17/873).

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The Port of Hong Kong

Following the disturbances at Amoy and confronted with opposition to emigration at the opium ports from the opium houses and the Foreign Office, the British emigration agent moved his recruiting operation to Hong Kong. By Article III of the Treaty of Nanking, (1842), China ceded permanently the island of Hong Kong to the British.[38] Though the island consisted of twenty-nine square miles of barren rock, it had an enormous deepwater harbor that was well sheltered from all sides. To attract commerce, Sir Henry Pottinger, British superintendent of trade on the China coast, declared Hong Kong a free port without customs or duties of any kind.[39] After an initial outburst of enthusiasm, trade languished, as Chinese officials on the mainland forbade Chinese junks and traders to frequent the new port.[40] For the remainder of the 1840s, Hong Kong survived as the center of the illegal opium trade.[41] It became a haunt for pirates, vagabonds, and thieves—a haven for the "discontented and bad spirits of the Empire," who looked upon British law as a farce when compared with Chinese justice.[42]

Figure 3. The port of Hong Kong circa 1870 (taken from *Le Tour du Monde*, Vol. XXIX, 1875, 353)

38 Mayers, *Treaties Between the Empire of China and Foreign Powers*, 1-2.

39 E. J. Eitel, *Europe in China: The History of Hong Kong from the Beginning to the Year 1882* (London: Luzac and Company, 1895), 132.

40 *Ibid.*, 183.

41 G. B. Endacott, *A History of Hong Kong* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 73, 130-131; Baruch Boxer, *Ocean Shipping in the Evolution of Hong Kong* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 13.

42 Eitel, *Europe in China: The History of Hong Kong*, 251.

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Table 4
Emigration from the Port of Hong Kong, 1854-1880

DESTINATION	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	TOTALS
U.S.A.	10,496	2,467	4,867	5,803	4,989	?	?	7,734	?	7,320	2,920	?	2,280	2,995	5,609	?	?	5,595	10,362	17,634	16,533	19,748	14,949	10,458	8,104	9,019	7,346	177,415+
AUSTRALIA	4,341	10,081	7,602	17,721	8,867	?	?	2,809	?	352	851	?	1,148	276	274	?	?	1,345	375	40	1,242	9,121	7,250	7,546	4,447	3,063	4,958	93,209+
SOUTHEAST ASIA		15	794	329			66					60*	600*	721	2,310		70*		11,528	10,534	14,325	18,779	22,324	20,062	24,896	21,030	37,666	186,109
NEW ZEALAND																		2,553	178	560	766	478	48	121	345	135	?	5,191
CANADA										137					259								661	265	355	282	435	2,394
Br. GUIANA					292*		1,313*	2,297*	1,910*			493*													506			6,808
CUBA			1,203*	2,126*	1,662*																							4,991
PERU																382*	381*											763
SURINAM													825*	291*	252*	501*												1,869
HAWAII												527*	262*									111	1118	1102				3,120
TAHITI											337*	698*																1,035
INDIA											2370*											15						2,385
TOTALS	14,837	12,563	14,466	25,980	15,810	10,217	15,183	12,840	10,421	7,809	6,607	6,845	5,115	4,283	8,704	18,285	12,991	29,501	27,721	28,768	31,866	48,152	46,350	39,741	38,653	33,529	50,325	543,097+

* Denotes contract emigration

Sources: *Hong Kong Government Gazette*, 1854-1882; Bowring to Molesworth, October 6, 1855 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. IV), 38-39; Robinson to Newcastle, July 3, 1860 (BFO 97/102B); *O Boletim*, August 31, 1861.

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At the end of the 1840s, a fortunate combination of events brought prosperity to the island. In 1848, the British navy destroyed two pirate fleets that had virtually controlled China's southern coastline, exacting payments from all trading and fishing junks.[43] In 1850, as a result of the Taiping Rebellion, Chinese emigrants and capital, seeking a safe refuge from the clutches of marauders, commenced to flow to Hong Kong.[44] The discovery of gold in California and Australia gave rise to a thriving business in emigration.

In these early days of growth and prosperity, no records were kept, and hence there is no exact tally on emigration from the port. U.S. consul Henry Arthur Jr. reported that 7,785 emigrants sailed from there for San Francisco in 1851.[45] The same year, the *William Watson*, flying the British flag set sail with emigrants for Peru, and in 1853, emigration commenced to the British West Indies and to Australia. Table 5 shows the number of emigrants that passed through the port of Hong Kong from 1854 to 1880 as reported by the harbormaster in the colony's official newspaper, the *Hong Kong Government Gazette*. A breakdown of the figures for the years 1859-60, 1862, 1865, and 1868-69 is not given, and those for 1854 are for the first six months of the year only. The vast majority of the more than 543,097 emigrants that departed from Hong Kong in this twenty-six-year period did so under the credit-ticket system. They went principally to the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Southeast Asia. Approximately, 18,842, or 3.5 percent, left the port under the contract system.

As elsewhere on the China coast, emigration at Hong Kong was fraught with irregularities. The Chinese Passengers Act, passed by the British Parliament in 1855 to counteract abuses, made it incumbent on all British ships, carrying passengers from Chinese ports, to undergo inspection by a British emigration officer.[46] This official was to ascertain that all passengers were emigrating of their own free will and that each ship was properly equipped and ventilated for the voyage. But the provisions of the act were not strictly enforced.[47] In 1856, two British ships, *Duke of Portland* and *John Calvin*, which sailed from Hong Kong with emigrants for Havana, reported

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43 *Ibid.*, 270.

44 *Ibid.*, 259.

45 Arthur to Webster, March 29, 1852 (U.S. Department of State, Dispatches from United States Consuls in Hong Kong, 1844-1906).

46 For the full text of the Act see BFO 97/101, 849-858.

47 Bowring to Labouchere, July 26, 1856 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. IV), 56-57.

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a mortality of over 40 percent for the voyage.[48] An investigation revealed that both ships evaded the law. The emigrants on the *Duke of Portland* mutinied, and the *John Calvin* put out to sea although only 81 of its 298 passengers declared themselves willing to emigrate before the Hong Kong emigration officer.[49] The following year, secret barracoons housing unwilling emigrants were discovered on the island.[50]

The Hong Kong government, under considerable pressure from London, enacted a number of progressively restrictive ordinances to eliminate abuses. Emigration brokers were licensed and bonded.[51] No Chinese passengers could legally embark on an emigration vessel without first obtaining a permit from the emigration officer.[52] All houses for the reception of intending emigrants had to be licensed and operated according to rules specified by the government.[53] No ship could lawfully proceed to sea with Chinese emigrants without a license from the governor of the colony.[54] Chinese contract emigration departing from Hong Kong could only proceed to British colonies.[55]

But there were serious doubts about the efficacy of these measures. The colony's gambling houses were accused of supplying the neighboring port of Macau with contract laborers for Cuba and Peru.[56] Kidnappings were common occurrences.[57] In 1867, Chief Justice John Smale called upon Sir Richard Graves MacDonnell, the governor of Hong Kong, to prohibit all contract emigration as it was impossible to regulate it satisfactorily.[58] The governor responded that outlawing contract emigration would be an injustice to those who wished to emigrate as well as to British West Indian planters, who sorely needed laborers.[59]

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48 Labouchere to Bowring, June 29, 1857 (*Ibid.*), 75-76.

49 *Ibid.*

50 Eitel, *Europe in China: The History of Hong Kong*, 344.

51 *Hong Kong Government Gazette*, October 24, 1857.

52 *Ibid.*, June 22, 1867.

53 *Ibid.*, July 17, 1869.

54 *Ibid.*, September 25, 1869.

55 British Foreign Office to the Governor of Hong Kong, December 14, 1869 (BFO 17/877).

56 *The Daily Press* (Hong Kong), April 3, 1872.

57 Eitel, *Europe in China: The History of Hong Kong*, 501; *Hong Kong Daily Press*, May 27, 1873.

58 BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. XV (1868-69), 9.

59 *Ibid.*, 11-13.

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There was another reason for allowing the emigration to continue, which the governor did not mention. It would seem that a considerable amount of Hong Kong money was tied up in the traffic. R. Rowett, a member of Hong Kong's legislative council, charged that even some of London's commercial houses and banks were financially very much involved in contract emigration on the China coast.[60] During the 1860s and early 1870s, while Hong Kong newspapers thundered against the abuses of emigration at Macau, Hong Kong merchants quietly reaped rich profits from outfitting and provisioning almost all foreign ships engaged in emigration from China. When Sir A. E. Kennedy, on assuming the office of Governor of Hong Kong in 1872, officially acknowledged to the London government that "Macau coolie ships are almost invariably fitted in the port of Hong Kong,"[61] a shocked colonial secretary called for new legislation.[62] As soon as the Queen's confirmation of the "Chinese Emigrant Ship Ordinance, 1873" was received in the colony in August of that year, seven emigrant vessels, being outfitted in the harbor for the Macau emigration trade, were ordered to leave.[63] But the new British ordinance came too late to have any direct effect on the Macau traffic, as the Portuguese government decided to terminate all emigration from Macau early in 1874.

The island of Hong Kong was not particularly well suited to contract emigration. Emigrants had to be obtained from the mainland, and the well-organized Chinese-controlled immigration to California and Australia did not welcome competition from agents recruiting for Latin America. Furthermore, British public opinion, kept informed by the Anti-Slavery Society of the atrocities connected with Chinese immigration to South America and the Caribbean, looked upon all contract emigration on the China coast with suspicion and pressured the London government to close Hong Kong to the traffic. To British officials in China, however, the solution to the problems of contract emigration lay in persuading the Chinese government to legalize and regulate emigration, thus controlling the operations of crimps, who were regarded as the chief perpetrators of abuses.[64] An opportunity to test this belief presented itself at Canton in 1859.

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60 Eitel, *Europe in China: The History of Hong Kong*, 500.

61 Kennedy to Kimberley, October 19, 1872 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. IV), 317-318.

62 Kimberley to Kennedy, December 17, 1872 (*Ibid.*), 318-319.

63 Kennedy to Kimberley, August 29, 1873 (*Ibid.*), 365-366.

64 Bonham to Hammond, July 4, 1854 (*Ibid.*, Vol. III), 338-341; Alcock to Bowring, April 12, 1859 (*Ibid.*, Vol. IV), 111.

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Canton and Whampoa

The port city of Canton, situated eighty miles inland at the head of the Pearl River Delta, was for centuries China's principal point of contact with the Western world. Canton was the first Chinese port regularly visited by Western traders. The Arabs came there in the seventh century. The Portuguese arrived in the sixteenth century, followed by the Spaniards, the Dutch, and the English. Whampoa, twelve miles downstream from Canton, served as a deepwater anchorage for large vessels.

From 1760, all the foreign commerce of China was by imperial decree limited to the port of Canton.[65] Foreigners were restricted to dealing with a select group of Chinese merchants (cohong), who were directly answerable to the government in Peking. This monopolistic system, together with the controversy surrounding the opium trade, led to increasing friction that erupted into open conflict between China and Great Britain in what came to be known as the Opium War, 1839-1842. The Treaty of Nanking, signed on August 29, 1842, brought peace and replaced the closed cohong system with five ports at which foreigners could live and trade.

Canton was a traditional center of emigration as well as of trade. Prior to the 1840s, most Cantonese emigrants went to Southeast Asia, many of them going by way of Macau. In 1848, ten emigrants departed from Canton for California, and these were followed by about 900 others in 1849.[66] A regular flow of emigrants to the Americas ensued, with some going to Peru, but the vast majority went to California. British consul Adam W. Elmslie, in response to an inquiry from the British Foreign Office in 1852, stated that the local Cantonese authorities did not interfere in any way whatsoever with emigration, that placards were distributed throughout the countryside notifying the people of the departure of emigrant vessels, and that recruitment was carried on openly.[67] Toward the end of the decade, however, the mood changed. Competition among crimps, in particular among those supplying receiving ships anchored at Whampoa, led to a multiplication of abuses, until it was deemed unsafe for a native to walk the streets of Canton even in broad daylight.[68] Governor-

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65 John King Fairbanks, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast: The Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842-1854* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1964), 51.

66 Elmslie to Bowring, August 25, 1852 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. III), 17.

67 *Ibid.*

68 Alcock to Bowring, April 12, 1859 (*Ibid.*, Vol. IV), 105.

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general Laou, the highest-ranking Chinese official residing in Canton, claimed that the many schemes of kidnappers were the "offspring of the receiving ship system."[69] In 1859, there were at least six receiving ships anchored at Whampoa: the *Pioneer*, *Governor Morton*, and *Messenger* flying the U.S. flag, the *Westward Ho* with Peruvian registration, the *Fanny Kirchner* under the flag of the German state of Oldenburg, and the *Sooloo* flying the Dutch colors.[70] These ships served as feeders for the barracoons at Macau. Small boats, plying their recruiting trade among the maze of streams and canals in the neighborhood of Canton (see figure 7), supplied the receiving ships with emigrants. The system was particularly effective from the recruiter's standpoint. When a batch of emigrants was delivered to a receiving ship, anyone who insisted that he was unwilling to emigrate was handed back to the crimp, who so terrified him by refinements of torture that when he was presented to another receiving ship, he gladly chose deportation rather than incur the risk of falling into the crimp's hands again.[71]

Outraged by the growing number of kidnappings, the people commenced to administer their own merciless brand of instant justice. Several crimps caught in the act of coercing a victim, or merely suspected of doing so, were lynched or beaten to death by mobs.[72] In April 1859, the Chinese mercantile community appealed to the foreign consuls at Canton to take some action to stop the kidnappings.[73] The following day, the Allied commanders, who had been in occupation of Canton since January 1858, and fearing for the safety of the foreign community, issued a proclamation warning the people against crimps and strictly prohibiting kidnapping.[74] But as prohibition alone could hardly suffice to stop the evil, the Allied commanders brought pressure to bear on the provincial authorities to legalize and regulate emigration.[75] On April 9, Peh-kwei, governor of the Province of Kwangtung, following the lead of two district magistrates, solemnly proclaimed that kidnapping would be punished by death, that a reward of $40 would be paid for the arrest and

69 Laou to Perry, November, 1859 (BFO 881/894).

70 Hale to Winchester, December 9, 1859 (BFO 881/894).

71 Mayers to Parkes, January 6, 1859 (BFO 881/894).

72 Alcock to Bowring, April 12, 1859 (BFO 881/894); Bruce to Russell, January 22, 1860 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. IV), 172.

73 For the text of the petition see Bowring to Malmesbury, April 15, 1859, Inclosure 2 (*Ibid.*), 106-107.

74 For the text of the proclamation see *Ibid.*, Inclosure 4, 108.

75 Bruce to Malmesbury, May 3, 1859 (*Ibid.*), 112.

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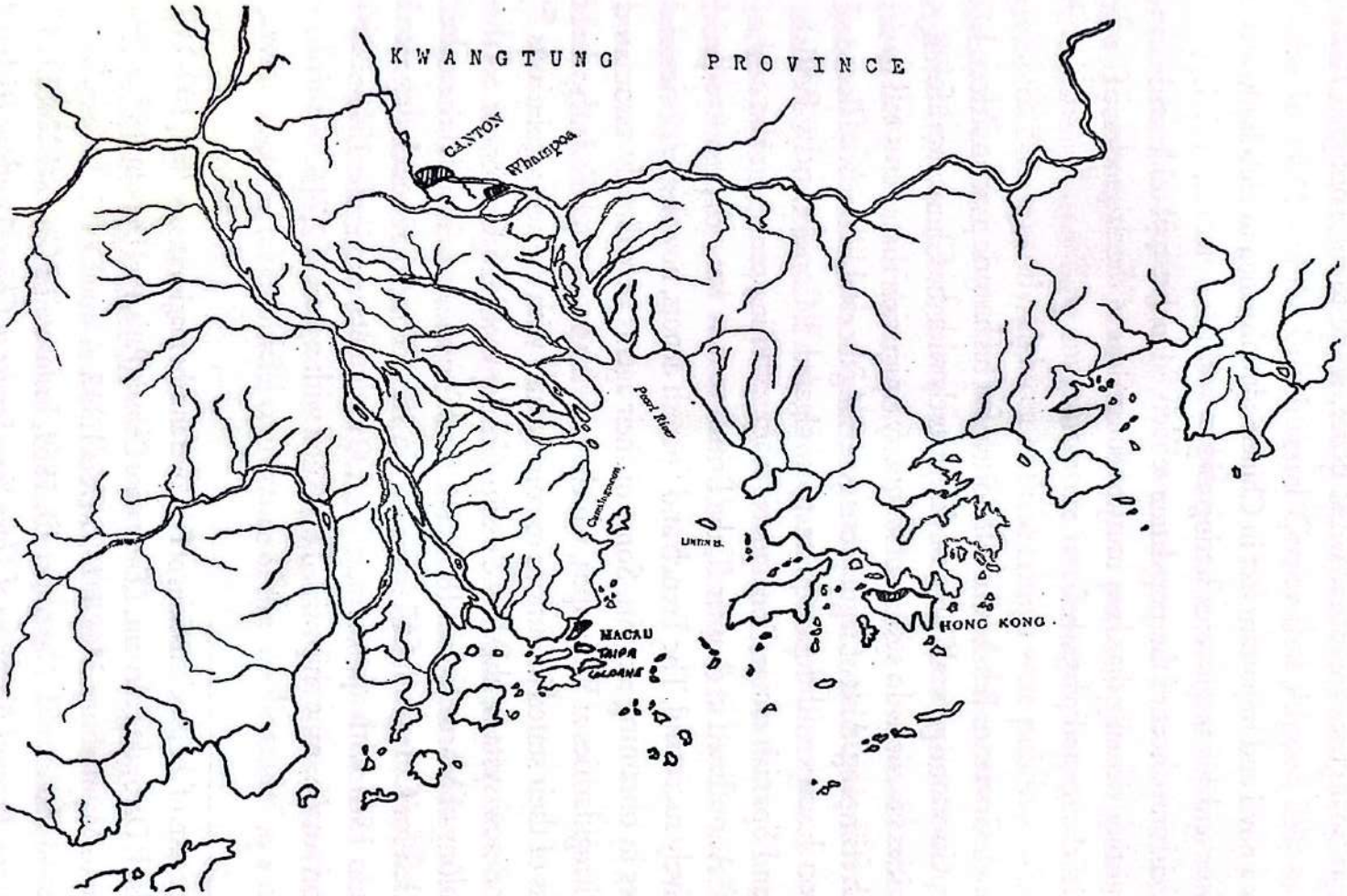

Map 4
The Pearl River Delta, Kwangtung Province

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conviction of every kidnapper, but that those compelled by poverty to seek a livelihood overseas could lawfully do so.[76] This was in many respects a revolutionary pronouncement. By authorizing voluntary emigration, Governor Peh-kwei acted in direct opposition to the laws of the empire. The British minister at Shanghai, Frederick W. A. Bruce, wrote to the Foreign Office:

> It is a novel and important fact in Chinese administration to see a high officer and his magistrates setting aside a traditional maxim, which the circumstances of the population renders no longer applicable and admitting virtually that laws must be subservient to the exigencies of social change and progress.[77]

Though Governor Peh-kwei died shortly after his historic proclamation, his successor, Governor-general Laou, working closely with the Chinese and foreign communities sanctioned a system of voluntary emigration that attempted to do away with crimping. A set of regulations governing the establishment of licensed emigration houses and depots were promulgated.[78] Consequently, British, French, and Spanish emigration agents set up recruiting centers in the city of Canton.[79] As outlined in chapter II, the British venture was well organized and was relatively successful. The French and Spanish depots, however, experienced difficulties in obtaining recruits. Some of their agents were directly associated with the irregularities at Whampoa, which made the people and the authorities suspicious of their stated intentions to comply fully with the new regulations.[80] Under the new system, the French ship *Gallilee* took 426 Cantonese to the French colony of Martinique in 1859 and two ships, one American and the other Chilean, left for Cuba with 647 passengers in 1860. Four more vessels departed for Cuba in 1861 with approximately 1,500 emigrants, and in the 1865-1866 emigration season, nine ships sailed for Cuba with a total of 2,716.

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76 For the texts of the proclamations of Peh-kwei and the magistrates see *Ibid.*, 109-110. See also P. Darby de Thiersant, *L'Emigration Chinois* (Paris, Paul Dupont, 1872), 3-4.

77 Bruce to Malmesbury, May 3, 1859 (*Ibid.*), 112.

78 Parkes to Hammond, November 13, 1859, Inclosure 12 (*Ibid.*), 122-123; C. B. Fisher, *Personal Narrative of Three Years Service in China* (London, Richard Bentley, 1863), 323-328.

79 Fisher, *Personal Narrative of Three Years Service in China*, 323.

80 Allied Commissioners to Perry, March 10, 1860 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. IV), 235-236.

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The British depot closed down in 1866 when the London government refused to ratify a new code of regulations drawn up by British, French, and Chinese representatives in the Emigration Convention of March of that year.[81] Thereafter, the only recorded sailings of contract emigration from Canton were the Spanish ship *Salvadora* that took 510 emigrants to Cuba in 1872 and the British vessel *Corona* that shipped 288 to British Guiana in 1873.

At the time that the new regulations for voluntary emigration were announced in November 1859, Governor-general Laou dispatched a force of war junks to the Whampoa anchorage to put a stop to the abuses there.[82] A number of unwilling emigrants were rescued and thirty-six crimps were arrested. Subsequently, eighteen of these crimps were publicly beheaded at Canton "as a warning to the people."[83] A Chinese cruiser was then stationed at Whampoa as a deterrent to further abuses.[84] These actions merely slowed down the activities of the crimps. The policing of the innumerable streams and channels of the delta, where fishermen and crimps could not be differentiated, was almost an impossible task. As long as shipments of emigrants continued without adequate supervision at Macau and to a lesser extent at Hong Kong, crimps were prepared to run the risk of losing their heads in return for substantial profits.

Shanghai, Wusung, and Ningpo

In sanctioning voluntary emigration from Canton in October 1859, Governor-general Laou acted contrary to orders from Peking. In July of that year, following disturbances at Shanghai and Ningpo, Ho Kuei-ch'ing, imperial commissioner for foreign affairs, reiterated China's traditional prohibition against emigration.[85] This was the first time that the Peking government had taken official cognizance of the "coolie trade" as a matter of national concern.[86]

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81 Clementi, *The Chinese in British Guiana*, 206-207.

82 Laou to Allied Commissioners, November 8, 1859 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. IV), 127-128.

83 Proclamation by Governor-General Laou, Inclosure 6 in No. 7 (*Ibid.*), 148.

84 Parkes to Bruce, November 26, 1859 (Ibid.), 149.

85 Bruce to Russell, December 5, 1859 (BFO 881/894).

86 Irick, "Ch'ing Policy Toward the Coolie Trade, 1847-1878," 463-464.

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Shanghai and Ningpo were two of the five ports opened to foreign trade in 1842. Shanghai was then a small walled city lying fourteen miles above the mouth of the Whangpu River, a tributary to the Yangtze. Because of its ideal position at the gateway to the great Yangtze valley, it had been for years a port of some significance, but after it was opened to foreign trade, it quickly became a major commercial metropolis.[87] By the 1870s, it was handling over 60 percent of the total foreign trade of China. Wusung, situated at the juncture of the Whangpu and the Yangtze rivers, was Shanghai's outer port, and from the early 1840s, it was an outlet for opium for the Shanghai area.[88]

The port of Ningpo, in the northeastern corner of Chekiang province, was an ancient seat of learning and a center of Buddhism. The proximity of the superior port of Shanghai hindered its commercial development. However, from the early 1840s, it too had its opium station on the island of Chusan that lay at the entrance to the harbor.[89]

The people of these northern port cities, and of northern China in general, were not at all disposed to emigrate.[90] In 1849, 200 emigrants were persuaded to sail on the *Amazon*, a British vessel, for California, and in 1851, 20 or 30 departed for Australia.[91] There is no evidence of any further emigration until the abortive attempt in 1855 to ship to Cuba some 47 female children from the vicinity of Shanghai and Ningpo.[92] This incident brought forth condemnatory proclamations from the governor-general of Fukien and Chekiang,[93] as well as from the Taotai of Ningpo.[94]

In 1856, the French vessel *Caffarette* sailed from Wusung with emigrants for Cuba.[95] The same year, a Peruvian vessel, the *Antonio Terry*, left Wusung for Callao supposedly in ballast,[96] but in all probability, there was a full compliment of emigrants on board. Due to the vigilance of the local Chinese

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87 Fairbanks, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, 155.

88 Fairbanks, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, 135, 229.

89 Ibid., 135.

90 Hague to Bowring, September 14, 1852 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. III), 26-27; *North China Herald*, January 7, 1860 (Supplement).

91 Alcock to Bowring, September 1, 1852 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. III), 26-28.

92 The incident is discussed in Chapter II.

93 *The Friend of China*, July 11, 1855.

94 "A Special Prohibitory Proclamation," April, 1855 (BFO 97/101).

95 *The North China Herald*, August 9, 1856.

96 *North China Herald*, August 2, 1856.

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authorities, who were adamantly opposed to emigration, emigrant ships, by some subterfuge, either were declared as leaving the port in "ballast," or were merely taking passengers to some other Chinese port, to which there could be little objection.[97] The foreign communities and foreign consuls at Shanghai and Ningpo were equally determined to prevent abuses such as had taken place at Amoy and were reportedly at this time a daily occurrence at Swatow. When Andrew Connolly, a British merchant, collected 160 Chinese laborers in the French settlement of Shanghai for shipment overseas, Her Majesty's consul, D. B. Robertson, denounced him to the Taotai.[98] William Reed, the United States minister to China, attempted to prevent an American ship, the *Wandering Jew*, from sailing with emigrants for Cuba in January 1858. Over the objections of Chinese officials, the U.S. vice consul at Shanghai, William Knapp Jr., stating that the ship was merely transporting Chinese passengers from Wusung to Amoy, gave the ship her sailing papers. Knapp was relieved of his post, and his successor, Albert L. Freeman, determined to discover whether or not the passengers had embarked voluntarily, made a personal visit to the vessel. An examination revealed that of the 236 Chinese on board, 117 claimed that they were there against their will. Many of them stated that a crimp in the employ of Mr. Connolly had deceived them. These men were released.[99] The *Wandering Jew* sailed with the others to Amoy where she filled out her cargo with 231 more before setting out for Cuba.[100]

Further incidents led to a serious threat to the foreign community in July and August of 1859. In April of that year, two French vessels, the *Admiral Baudin* and the *Indien*, departed from Shanghai in "ballast" but actually were carrying emigrants to the French colonies of Martinique and Guadaloupe.[101] In July, Chinese passengers on another French ship, the *Gertrude*, chartered to Spanish agents, attempted to escape as the ship lay at anchor at Wusung. The crew opened fire upon them, and about 40 were killed or drowned.[102] At the appearance of many bodies in the river,

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97 Robertson to Bowring, July 26, 1856 (BFO 97/102A).

98 Robertson to Bowring, March 5, 1856 (BFO 97/102A).

99 "Report from the Committee on Commerce," April 16, 1860 (U.S. House Report, No. 443, 1 sess. 36 Cong.), 20-22.

100 Felix Erenchún, *Anales de la Isla de Cuba: Diccionario Administrativo, Económico, Estadístico y Legislativo*, 4 vols. (Habana, Imprenta la Habanera, 1858), II (1856), 1332.

101 *North China Herald*, April 9, and 30, 1859.

102 Ibid., August 6, 1859.

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the people became alarmed, and a crowd of about 5,000, armed with clubs and knives attacked two British sailors, mistaking them for kidnappers. They killed one and seriously wounded the other. When Horatio N. Lay, inspector general of the Chinese Maritime Customs and a missionary, the Reverend John Hobson, attempted to interfere, the mob turned its fury upon them. Lay was stabbed several times, and Hobson was badly beaten.[103] Eventually, the Chinese authorities succeeded in dispersing the people and restoring order.

The riot took place on July 29. The following day, Siamese visitors to Shanghai were attacked by a mob, and one was pushed into a pool and drowned.[104] This could hardly have been a case of mistaken identity. The incident can only be explained by the fact that in December 1857, a Siamese vessel, the *Bangkok Mark*, while at anchor at Shanghai, was discovered to have on board 42 kidnapped children ranging in age from eight to seventeen years. They had been sold to the captain for $2 to $6 each and were destined for Siam (modern Thailand).[105]

Placards appeared in Shanghai and Wusung, condemning foreigners and associating kidnapping with missionary endeavors. The following sample, dated July 30, reflects the thinking and mood of the aroused populace:

> The Intendant and Magistrates have issued notifications at Shanghai to the effect that foreigners with hearts of wolves are in the habit of coming to the towns and villages, where, acting in concert with natives professing their doctrine, they make a show of hiring people to assist them, their real purpose being to entrap men to their perdition. Hateful and detestable beings! Of a truth all natives professing their doctrine are devils, are demons. Now, lest the simple people in their greed of gain be beguiled in this way, let the people of the towns and villages with joint effort and united heart set upon and kill every foreigner that is associated with natives professing his doctrine in the teaching of religion; that the deceiving of man may be put a stop to.[106]

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103 Smith to Cass, September 3, 1859 (U. S. Department of State, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906).

104 Irick, "Ch'ing Policy Toward the Coolie Trade, 1847-1878," 81.

105 *North China Herald*, December 26, 1857.

106 *North China Herald*, August 27, 1859.

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In subsequent weeks, there was a number of attacks on missionaries and churches, and two foreign sailors were beaten to death.[107] Riots also broke out at Ningpo, and foreigners were assaulted.[108]

Meanwhile, the French minister to China, A. de Bourboulon ordered the *Gertrude* to submit to an inspection by Chinese officials, and all of the 157 passengers found on board, most of them from Ningpo, were released to their homes.[109] A crimping boat, with 34 kidnapped Chinese, intercepted by the river police was chopped up and publicly displayed together with the heads of four crimps, natives of Ningpo.[110] This pacified the people somewhat, and gradually the tension subsided.

An imperial edict of August 22, 1859, called for swift punishment of kidnappers and the leaders of the mob attacks on foreigners.[111] Representatives of foreign governments and foreign consuls at Shanghai and Ningpo pledged themselves to do all in their power to prevent their subjects from hiring Chinese to go abroad.[112] No further contract emigration from the area, at least for the remainder of the nineteenth century, is recorded.

In one port after another, contract emigration showed itself to be disruptive of the peace. The opposition of foreign commercial communities on the China coast to its presence in their midst, as well as the growing vigilance of local Chinese authorities, gradually pushed the traffic to Macau, where it was concentrated for most of the 1860s and the early 1870s.

The Port of Macau

> The settlement of Macao is a monument of Chinese toleration and of Portuguese tenacity . . . It said as much for the tact of the Portuguese as for the forbearance of the Chinese authorities that such an isolated

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107 Ibid.; Irick, "Ch'ing Policy Toward the Coolie Trade, 1847-1878," 83; Smith to Cass, September 3, 1859 (U.S. Dept. of State, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906).

108 Bruce to Russell, December 2, 1859 (BFO 17/315).

109 Bruce to Russell, August 15, 1859 (BFO 17/315); *North China Herald*, August 26, 1859.

110 Irick, "Ch'ing Policy Toward the Coolie Trade, 1847-1878," 85; *North China Herald*, August 27, 1859.

111 Irick, "Ch'ing Policy Toward the Coolie Trade, 1847-1878," 84.

112 Ibid., 88, 91.

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position as that of Macao should have been held without force . . . on terms of mutual amity for nearly four hundred years.

Alexander Michie, *The Englishman in China* (London, William Blackwood and Sons, 1900), 287, 290.

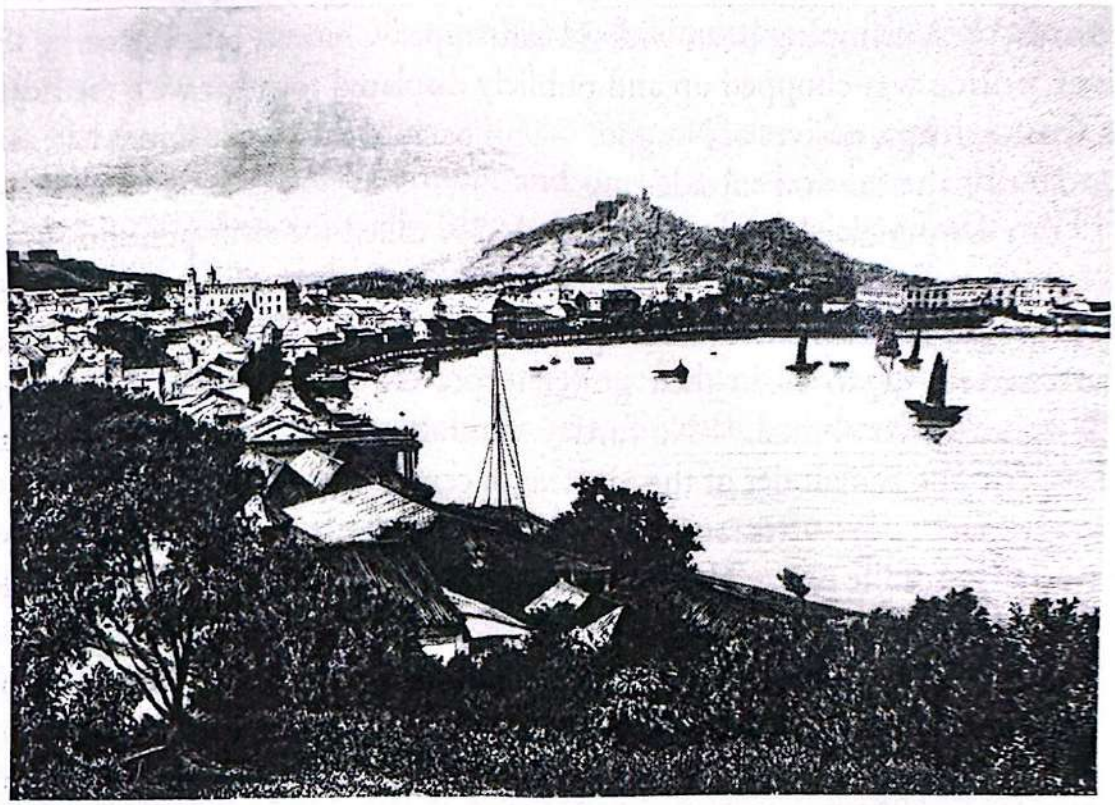

Figure 4. The port of Macau circa 1870 (taken from *Le Tour du Monde*, Vol. XXIX, 1875, 405)

Macau is the oldest European outpost in the Far East. The Portuguese arrived on the China coast in 1513, and after three decades of attempts to establish an enclave on Chinese soil, they finally settled on the peninsula of Macau with the blessing of the local Chinese authorities.[113] The concession was seemingly a reward for Portuguese help in extirpating pirates who were a constant menace to commerce and were even then bold enough to lay siege to Canton.[114] Situated at the mouth of the Pearl River estuary, sixty-

[113] Luis Gonzaga Gomes, *Páginas da História de Macau* (Macau, Notícias de Macau, 1966), 1, 37.

[114] "Historical Landmarks of Macao," *The Chinese Recorder*, Vol. XVIII, No. 5 (May 1877), 178; Michie, *The Englishmen in China*, 289-290.

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five miles from Canton and possessing a large sheltered harbor, the two-and-a-half-mile-long-by-one-mile-wide peninsula was ideal as yet another link in the chain of Portuguese trading stations, which extended from Africa to Japan. Nor were the local Chinese authorities ill-pleased to have so effective a counterpoise to pirates strategically placed at the entrance to the Pearl River.[115]

After 1557, when the Portuguese were first permitted to build warehouses at Macau,[116] the port developed rapidly, virtually controlling all foreign commerce with the great emporium of Canton. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the English and Dutch East India companies maintained establishments at Macau.[117] The entire foreign mercantile community, forbidden to reside at Canton except during the trading season or to bring their wives and families there, made the Macau peninsula its home. For nearly three hundred years, Macau served as the gateway to the Chinese Empire, and through it glimpses of Chinese life and culture filtered to the outside world.

From the Chinese standpoint, Macau was an ideal location for the sometimes-unruly barbarians. There they could be effectively quarantined and controlled. The merchants did not complain too strenuously as Macau, wafted by cool breezes, was by far the most comfortable spot on the south China coast during the hot summer months. With its pleasant climate and quaint mixture of Oriental and European cultures, Macau was to many a weary European merchant the "gem of the Orient earth and ocean sea," as Sir John Bowring poetically classified it.[118] To this day, well served by fast hydrofoil craft, it remains a favored resort of tourists and businessmen and their families escaping for a restful weekend from overcrowded Hong Kong, some forty miles away across the estuary.

In allowing the Portuguese to establish themselves at Macau, the Chinese did not thereby forfeit their sovereignty over the peninsula. A ground rent of 550 taels ($750) was paid annually to the magistrate of the district of Heung-shan, and though the Portuguese set up their own

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115 Michie, *The Englishman in China*, 290.

116 Carlos Francisco Moura, *Macau e o Comércio Português com a China e o Japão nos Séculos XVI e XVII* (Macau, Imprensa Nacional, 1973), 9-10.

117 Michie, *The Englishman in China*, 191.

118 "Historical Landmarks of Macao," *The Chinese Recorder*, Vol. XVIII, No. 5 (May 1887), 175.

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local government, the peninsula was administered jointly by Chinese and Portuguese officials.[119] This arrangement persisted for almost three centuries.

When Western nations commenced signing treaties with China in the 1840s, Portugal sought to clarify and consolidate its hold on Macau, but the Chinese were reluctant to negotiate. In 1849, the Portuguese governor of Macau, João Maria Ferreira do Amaral, expelled the Chinese customs officials, stopped payment of the ground rent, and refused to acknowledge Chinese overlordship.[120] But it was not until 1887, through persistent diplomacy on the part of the Portuguese, that the Chinese government ceded the peninsula to Portugal in perpetuity, together with the islands of Taipa and Coloane (map 4).[121]

After Macau lost the opium trade in 1822, the colony experienced a rapid decline.[122] During the 1830s and 1840s, when piracy was rampant in the China sea, well-armed lorchas, based at Macau and manned by Macaese, enjoyed a monopoly of the lucrative business of providing protection to merchant and fishing vessels all along the China coast.[123] Renowned for their fearless courage, the Macaese were at times recruited by Chinese admirals to do battle with pirate fleets.[124] Given permission to enter Chinese waters in pursuit of their prey, they became well acquainted with the many ports, inlets, bays, and rivers up and down the coast.[125] The system worked well for a while until the lorchas betrayed their trust by adopting methods of extortion and

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119 "Historical Landmarks of Macao," *The Chinese Recorder*, Vol. XVIII, No. 7 (July 1887), 273; Michie, *The Englishman in China*, 290; Fairbanks, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, 47.

120 J. D. Thomson, "Historical Landmarks of Macao," *The Chinese Recorder*, Vol. XIX, No. 10 (October, 1888), 451-452.

121 Godfrey E. P. Hertslet, *Treaties, etc., Between Great Britain and China and between China and Foreign Powers* (London, Harrison and Sons, 1908), I, 422-423.

122 "Historical Landmarks of Macao," *The Chinese Recorder*, Vol. XVIII, No. 11 (November, 1887), 427.

123 Gomes, *Páginas da História de Macau*, 223-232; Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao* (Hong Kong, C. A. Kelly and Walsh Limited, 1902), 319.

124 *The Friend of China*, February 5, 1851.

125 Gomes, *Páginas da História de Macau*, 232.

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plunder that rivaled those of the pirates.[126] The protectors turned oppressors and, having lost the support and respect of their clientele, were finally routed at Ningpo in 1851. There, native junks came to terms with a pirate fleet, and together they massacred the Macaese.[127]

The founding of Hong Kong and the opening of the treaty ports in 1842 were near-fatal blows to Macau's faltering economy. British and American traders abandoned Macau for the incomparably superior harbor of Hong Kong: the Macau harbor was silting up, and large vessels had to anchor three to four miles from shore.[128] By midcentury, the colony was reduced to near destitution.[129] P. G. Mesnier, private secretary to the governor of Macau, summed up its predicament: "Macao sank, and in her hopeless insignificance and misery was tempted by the Coolie Trade."[130]

Macau had many advantages as an emigration port. It had served as an outlet for Chinese emigrants for centuries,[131] and in recent decades, an increasing number had departed from there for Southeast Asia.[132] The opium trade and the convoy system gave the Macaese a working relationship with Chinese officials and the local population all along the coast, and provided them with an unparalleled understanding of China's navigable rivers and coastal waters. After 1851, the lorchas lying unemployed in the harbor were ready for use as passenger boats to supply emigrant ships, and empty warehouses could easily be converted into emigration depots. It was almost as if the colony had intentionally prepared

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126 MacGowan, "Piracies, Riots and Lynch Law at Ningpo," *Shanghai Almanac for 1853 and Miscellany* (Shanghai, Herald Office, 1853); Michie, *The Englishman in China*, 302; Gomes, *Páginas de História de Macau*, 233-234.

127 Cooke, *China and Lower Bengal*, 131.

128 Marquis de Moges, *Recollections of Baron Gros's Embassy to China and Japan in 1857-58* (London, Richard Griffin and Company, 1860), 91.

129 *The Friend of China*, March 13, 1847.

130 P. G. Mesnier, "A Reply to 'Macao and its Slave Trace,'", *The China Review*, Vol. II, No. 2 (1873), 119.

131 See Chapter II.

132 Andrew Ljungstedt, *An Historical Sketch of the Portuguese Settlements in China and of the Roman Catholic Church and Mission in China* (Boston, James Monroe and Company, 1836), 129.

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itself to cope with the exodus of refugees from the Taiping Rebellion that commenced in the 1850s.

Yet emigration from Macau to the Americas developed slowly. Shippers preferred the ports of Amoy, Swatow, Cumsingmoon, and Canton because they were closer to the sources of supply. When it became progressively more difficult to operate from these ports, immigration to California and Australia was confined to Hong Kong, and the traffic to Latin America shifted to Macau. Two Frenchmen, Guillon and Durand, were the first to organize contract emigration from the Portuguese colony.[133] Under their auspices, the British ships *Mariner* and *Coromandel* sailed for Peru with 813 Chinese laborers in 1851.[134] The following year, a Portuguese ship, the *Sophia*, departed for Cuba with 250 emigrants,[135] and the *Ohio*, registered in Boston, sailed with passengers for California.[136] For the next four years, an average of five to six passenger ships sailed annually for Latin America with only one emigrant vessel sailing for California[137] and another for Australia.[138] In 1857, there was a marked increase in the traffic with the departure of 13 ships carrying over 8,000 passengers, all of them destined for Cuba. From that point on, with the exception of the years 1861 and 1862, Macau handled the bulk of Chinese contract immigration to Latin America. When the traffic came to an end in March 1874, over 210,000 Chinese had passed through Macau to South America and the Caribbean.[139] That accounted for approximately 75 percent of Chinese emigrants to the area in the years 1847 to 1874.

The Chinese population of Macau, like that of Hong Kong, experienced a rapid growth during the 1850s and early 1860s. In 1849, before the traffic in laborers to the West had commenced, there resided in the colony

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133 "Relatorio da Emigração Chineza em Macao," *O Boletim* (August 10, 1861). See also Manuel de Castro Sampaio, *Os Chins de Macao* (Hong Kong, Typographia de Noranha e Filhos, 1867), 136.

134 *The Friend of China*, January 1, 1851.

135 "Relatorio da Emigração Chineza em Macao," *O Boletim*, August 10, 1861.

136 "Consular Return of U.S. ships at Macau from January 1, 1852 to July 1, 1852 Inclusive," (U.S. Dept. of State, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Macao, 1849-1869).

137 "U.S. Vessels Arriving and Departing at Macao, January 1, 1852 to June 30, 1853," (U.S. Dept. of State, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Macao 1849-1869).

138 *O Boletim*, August 31, 1861.

139 See Table 5.

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Table 5
Emigration from the Port of Macau, 1851 to 1874

DESTINATION	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1866	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	TOTALS
CUBA		250	1,837	500	681	2,253	7,256	8,953	7,695	5,773	2,840	752	2,922	4,359	5,027	16348	11298	8,835	4,301	1064	5,705	14242	7,012	2,371	122,454
PERU	813		200	58		450		300	321	2098	564	1459	3,738	6,353	8,467	7,681	5,248	3371	4,835	12343	10814	5,613	5,826		81,552
BR.GUIANA								300	460																760
SURINAM								500																	500
COSTA RICA																						685			685
SOUTHEAST ASIA							150	22	493	248		325	339	325		865		288	259	228	458	158			3,833
MOZAMBIQUE							30																		30
CALIFORNIA		one ship	one ship																						?
AUSTRALIA						240																			240
TOTALS	813	250+	2037+	558	681	2943	7,438	10075	8,969	8,119	3,404	2536	6,999	10712	13674	24894	16546	12494	9,395	13635	16977	21698	12838	2,371	210,054+

Sources: *O Boletim*, 1851-1874; "Consular Returns of U.S. Ships at Macao from January 1, 1852 to July 1, 1852 inclusive" (U.S. Department of State, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Macao, 1849-1869); "U.S. Vessels Arriving and Departing from Macao, January 1, 1853 to June 30, 1853" (Ibid.); Robertson to Alcock, March 21, 1867 (BFO 17/874).

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4,587 people designated as "Christians" (including 490 African slaves) and 25,000 Chinese.[140] In the following decades, the number of Westerners remained virtually unchanged, but by 1867, the Chinese population had risen to 71,842. Of this number, 15,590 lived on 2,471 boats in the harbor, and approximately two-thirds of them were considered to be natives of Macau. Of the 56,252 Chinese residing on the peninsula, only 5,723 were actually born there: 48,617 came from Canton and its environs; 1,797 were natives of the province of Fukien; 63 migrated from the provision of Kuangsi; 39 came from Shanghai, and 13 came from Hong Kong.[141]

Many of the newcomers were pirates and other fugitives from justice.[142] Most of them were destitute, and the languishing Macau economy could not possibly provide them with a decent livelihood. The expanding emigration business afforded the only opportunity to make a living, and many of them joined its ranks. When emigration from Macau was terminated in 1874, some 20,000 to 30,000 Chinese lost their jobs.[143] Almost all of them were employed as crimps.

As elsewhere, abuse in emigration from Macau appeared early. The Macau government responded with humanitarian and restrictive legislation that acted as a temporary check on the more flagrant abuses, but it ultimately failed to eliminate the evils of the system. An ordinance enacted by Governor Isidoro Francisco Guimarães in September 1853 provided for sanitary accommodation for the emigrants on shore as well as on board ship and commanded that those rejected because of ill health or old age be returned to their homes, the emigration brokers paying all expenses.[144] To counteract the shipping of unwilling emigrants, it was decreed in November 1855 that all emigration contracts be registered and that emigrants be inspected prior to embarkation by the procurator and again by the harbormaster on board ship.[145] In June of the following year, it was further legislated that all *corretores*,

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140 João de Andrade Corvo, *Relatorio e Documentos sobre a Abolição da Emigração de Chinas Contratados em Macau Apresentado as Cortes na Sessão Legislativa de 1874* (Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1874), 72.

141 Ibid, 73.

142 Mesnier, "A Reply to 'Macao and Its Slave Trade,'" 122.

143 Robertson to Tenderdon, March 7, 1874 (BFO 17/885); Kennedy to Kimberley, December 31, 1873 (BFO 17/885).

144 *O Boletim*, October 27, 1855.

145 Ibid., November 10, 1855.

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or emigration brokers, be licensed, bonded for $200, and subject to forfeiture of their bond and license as well as imprisonment for coercing the unwilling into going overseas.[146]

John Bowring, the governor of Hong Kong, advised the Foreign Office in London, that Governor Guimarães of Macau admitted to him privately that notwithstanding stringent legislation, he found it all but impossible to eradicate existing abuses.[147] By this time, it was apparent that the root cause of most of the abuses lay with the employment of crimps.[148] It was also apparent that without crimps, emigrants could not be obtained. Hence legislation concentrated on controlling the activities of crimps and limiting their opportunities for fraud and deception.

In 1860, Governor Guimarães issued further regulations. The new legislation was patterned on the emigration system approved the previous year by the local Chinese authorities and the Allied commanders at Canton. The post of superintendent of emigration was created, with a fixed salary paid by the government so that it would be completely independent of vested interests. Emigrants were not to be kept under restraint at any time but must be allowed to come and go as they pleased, and barracoons must be open daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to all who wished to enter them.[149]

The Macau barracoons had been accused by the Chinese mercantile community at Canton of being virtual prisons.[150] When British consul Charles A. Winchester, who was highly critical of emigration abuses at Amoy and Canton, inspected one of these establishments in 1855, he found it to be "exceedingly well arranged and worthy of imitation. I found 480 stout men and boys well lodged and well clothed and looking clean and comfortable and the arrangement of the place was in every way satisfactory."[151] Four years later, a visit by British consul O. Cleverly revealed that the barracoons

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146 Ibid., June 7, 1856.

147 Bowring to Clarendon, June 27, 1856 (FO 97/102A).

148 Corvo, *Relatorio e Documentos*, 10; Antonio Joaquim Bastos Jr., *O Futuro de Macau ou as Vantagens que hão de Resultar da Admissão d'Uma Delegação de Alfandega Chineza em Macau* (Macau, Typographia Mercantil, 1873), 8.

149 *O Boletim*, May 5, 1860.

150 "Petition of the Chinese Mercantile Community at Canton," April 16, 1859 (BPP, ASS, *China*, Vol. IV), 106-107.

151 Winchester to Bowring, July 22, 1855 (BFO 97/1023).

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were under heavy guard, but that in "every other respect the conditions were excellent."[152]

Seemingly, competition among emigration brokers and crimps brought about the change from open to closed and guarded barracoons. Prospective emigrants, after entering into a contract with one broker, would disappear only, to present themselves at another barracoon, hoping thereby to obtain another round of food, clothing, lodging, and advance money. Or emigrants about to be shipped would claim to have been coerced or kidnapped and upon release would repeat their act elsewhere.[153] To defend themselves against such practices, barracoons did indeed take on the appearance of prisons, closely guarding emigrants who had signed contracts. Even after the 1860 decree that commanded barracoons to be open to all who wished to come and go, the presence of sentries armed with heavy clubs at open doors indicated something less than full compliance with the law.[154]

Continued abuses brought a growing chorus of protests from newspapers on the China coast as well as from Chinese and foreign officials, and some prominent members of the Portuguese community at Macau began to take a hard look at what the emigration traffic was doing to the colony. The Emigration Convention drawn up between China, Britain, and France in 1866 limited emigration to the treaty ports and prohibited emigrants from going to any country not having diplomatic relations with China.[155] This made emigration from Macau illegal, at least as far as the Chinese government was concerned. Lest there be any doubt, Price Kung, in a letter to Rutherford Alcock, the British commissioner in China, stated that emigration from Macau was prohibited by the treaty and requested that British merchant ships be prevented from taking any part in the Macau traffic.[156]

Throughout the 1860s, the Macau government made several attempts to come to some agreement with China on the subject of emigration but was rebuffed.[157] The Macau authorities maintained that the worst abuses were perpetrated outside their jurisdiction by the Chinese themselves all along the

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152 Cleverly to Winchester, December 24, 1859 (BFO 97/102B).

153 *O Boletim*, May 29, 1871; Corvo, *Relatorio e Documentos.*

154 W. A. P. Martin, *A Cycle of Cathay or China, South and North* (Edinburgh, Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1896), 32.

155 See Article 22 of the Emigration Convention in Appendix 2.

156 Kung to Alcock, March 15, 1866 (BFO 17/873).

157 Corvo, *Relatorio e Documentos*, 26-29, 30-33.

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China coast, and that China's refusal to cooperate was one of the principal causes of the perpetuation of the irregularities. It was pointed out that many of the 15,138 Chinese handed over to local Chinese authorities from 1868 to 1872 by the superintendent of emigration at Macau, because they were unwilling to emigrate, ended up back in the barracoons.[158] *O Oriente*, a Macau newspaper, accused Chinese officials of being in league with crimps.[159]

Revisions in Macau's emigration laws in 1868,[160] 1871,[161] 1872,[162] and 1873[163] attempted to emulate the provisions of the Emigration Convention of 1866. These and other measures were meant to demonstrate to the Chinese authorities in Peking that the Macau government disapproved of the abuses of subjects of a friendly nation.[164] In November 1868, when the Portuguese consul at Lima reported that 48 Chinese laborers on a hacienda on the Peruvian coast were branded on the cheek like slaves, Governor Horta suspended emigration from Macau to Peru.[165] The Portuguese government in Lisbon complained to the Spanish government about the treatment of Chinese in Cuba.[166] When Antonio Sergio de Sousa took over the governorship of Macau in 1870, he personally examined many emigrants and released large numbers of them to their homes.[167] In 1873, Governor Januario decreed that all contracts entered into with Chinese emigrants at Macau contain the stipulation that they be provided with a return passage to China and that the length of the contract be reduced from eight to six years.[168]

These actions may have demonstrated a measure of good will, but they failed to stop abuses. In April 1873, Governor Januario, admitted that his government was totally powerless to eliminate fraud and deception from the

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158 Ibid., 72.

159 *O Oriente*, June 27, 1872.

160 *O Boletim*, August 24, 1868.

161 Ibid., May 29, 1871.

162 Ibid., June 1, 1872.

163 Ibid., January 25, 1873, July 19, 1873.

164 Horta a Ministro e Secretario d'Estado dos Negocios da Marinha e Ultramar, Novembro 25, 1868 (AHU, Pasta 25, Macao, 1868).

165 Horta a Consul do Perú, Novembro 18, 1868 (AHU, Pasta 25, Macao, 1868); *O Boletim*, November 23, 1868.

166 *Gazeta de Macau e Timor*, October 15, 1872.

167 Smale to Foster, August 17, 1870 (BFO 17/878).

168 *O Boletim*, January 25, 1873, July 19, 1873.

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emigration traffic.[169] It was maintained that the crimps so brainwashed the emigrants into doing and saying as they dictated, so as to deceive the hated foreigner, that even three separate examinations before emigration officials were unable to detect all the victims of coercion.[170]

But the crimps could not have been so successful without the collusion of Macau officials. *O Echo do Povo*, a Portuguese-language newspaper based in Hong Kong, had hammered away at the abuses of emigration at Macau throughout the 1860s, blaming the Macau authorities as much as the crimps.[171] But it was not until 1872 that some elements in Macau itself began to voice their opposition to the traffic. The newspaper *Gazeta de Macau e Timor* called for a reassessment of the emigration trade, suggesting that its continuance might be doing the colony more harm than good. Its editors argued,

> If a colony lives at the expense of this social phenomenon (emigration), transitory by its very nature, and neglects opportunities to pursue the more stable commercial adventures and to deploy its energies in the development of resources which could endure indefinitely, the time will certainly come when the colony will be abandoned to impotence and misery.[172]

A growing body of opinion, both in government and among the people, regarded the emigration traffic as an evil that had corrupted the morals of the colony and alienated it from more legitimate sources of prosperity. P. G. Mesnier summed up the thinking of many Macaese when he wrote in the *China Review* in the fall of 1873, "This trade is not a hen that lays golden eggs; it is a minotaur that makes an Augean stable of Macau."[173] João de Andrade

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169 Corvo, *Relatorio e Documentos*, 47.

170 Sousa a Ministro e Secretario d'Estado, Agosto 31, 1868 (AHU, Pasta 25, Macao, 1868); Januario a Ministro e Secretario d'Estado, Junho 20, 1872 (Ibid., Pasta 27, Macao, 1872); MacDonnell to Hubert, June 22, 1872 (BFO 17/881).

171 As outlined by Jeffrey L. Grossman in a seminar paper entitled "The Portuguese View of the Chinese Contract Labor Trade: 1851-1874" (Harvard University, May, 1972), the *O Echo do Povo* carried on a continuous debate on Macau emigration throughout the 1860s with the *Ta-Ssi Yang-Kuo*, a Macau newspaper which defended the traffic.

172 *Gazeta de Macau e Timor*, October 15, 1872.

173 Mesnier, "A Reply to 'Macao and Its Slave Trade,'" 125.

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Corvo, minister and secretary of state for overseas affairs, in his report to the Cortes in Lisbon on Macau emigration, explained that the real interests of the colony were sacrificed to an illusory prosperity, which sapped the energy of the population and discredited the Portuguese name.[174] He pointed out that the commerce of Macau had been stationary in recent years and that the rising cost of supervising the emigration process offset the growth in government revenues from the increased traffic.[175] Besides, the relations with China were becoming less and less cordial and might come to open hostility if the traffic was not abandoned.[176]

Bowing to pressure from all sides[177] the Portuguese government in Lisbon directed Governor Januario to terminate emigration from Macau.[178] A decree published in the colony's official newspaper on December 27, 1873, proclaimed an end to Chinese contract emigration as of March 27, 1874.[179] The announcement was received by the Macaese with mixed feelings. By a stroke of a pen, a business that poured $200,000 annually into the colony's coffers was wiped out and 20,000 to 30,000 people were thrown out of work.[180] Nevertheless, to the credit of Macau, the majority of the voting population of the colony sanctioned the painful surgery by selecting, in a bitterly contested election on March 1, 1874, an anti-emigration candidate to represent them in the Cortes in Lisbon over his opponent, who was put forward by the pro-emigration faction.[181]

The last ship with Chinese contract laborers to Latin America sailed from Macau on March 27, 1874, the day before the decree banning emigration became effective.[182] A traffic that commenced at the port of Amoy in 1847; that flourished at the ports of Cumsingmoon, Amoy, Swatow, Hong Kong, and Canton for brief periods; that was unsuccessful in its attempt to become established at Shanghai and Ningpo; and that for the final decade of its twenty-eight-year history was concentrated at Macau was at an end.

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174 Corvo, *Relatorio e Documentos*, 71.

175 Ibid., 82-83.

176 Ibid., 71.

177 See Chapter VIII for an analysis of the various pressures involved.

178 Corvo, *Relatorio e Documentos*, 85.

179 *O Boletim*, December 27, 1873.

180 Mesnier, "A Reply to 'Macao and Its Slave Trade,'" 125.

181 *Gazeta de Macau e Timor*, March 3, 1874.

182 *O Boletim*, March 28, 1874.

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Thereafter, various attempts by Spain and Peru to revive the traffic proved futile, and though some Chinese did immigrate to Latin America in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, they did so as free agents. However, not all of the more than 275,000 Chinese who embarked for Latin America under the auspices of the "coolie trade" were destined to set foot on American soil, as the voyage took a heavy toll.

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